

TRIUMPH OF THE ECONOMIC VIRTUES
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himself. " Here, as in many other cases,
an upright
conscience must be the clerk of the
market."

In reality, however, the characteristic of
The Trades-
man's Calling, as of the age in which it was
written, is
not the relics of mediaeval doctrine which
linger em-
balmed in its guileless pages, but the robust
common
sense, which carries the author lightly over
traditional
scruples on a tide of genial, if Philistine,
optimism.

For his main thesis is a comfortable one—
that there
is no necessary conflict between religion
and business.

" Prudence and Piety were always very good
friends.

You may gain enough of both worlds if you
would mind
each in its place.¹¹ His object is to show
how that

agreeable result may be produced, by
dedicating, busi-
ness—with due reservations—to the
service of God,
and he has naturally little to say on the
moral casuistry

of economic conduct, because he is
permeated by the
idea that trade itself is a kind of religion. A
trades-

man's first duty is to get a full insight into
his calling,

and to use his brains to improve it. " He
that hath

lent you talents hath also said, ' Occupy till I
come 1 *

Your strength is a talent, your parts are
talents, and

so is your time. How is it that ye stand all
the day

idle ? . . * Your trade is your proper
province.

Your own vineyard you should keep. . „ . Your

fancies,
your understandings, your memories . . .
are all to be
laid out therein/' So far from there being an
inevitable
collision between the requirements of
business and
the claims of religion, they walk hand
in hand.
By a fortunate dispensation, , the virtues
enjoined
on Christians—diligence, moderation,
sobriety, thrift—
are the very qualities most conducive to
commercial
success. The foundation of all is
prudence; and
prudence is merely another name for the
"godly
wisdom [which] comes in and puts due
bounds " to his
expenses, " and teaches the tradesman to
live rather
somewhat below than at all above his
income." In-
dustry comes next, and industry is at once
expedient